Chapter 1

A harmonious relation to land is more intricate, and of more consequence, than the historians of its progress seem to realize.

Aldo Leopold
A Sand County Almanac, 1949

Context

The City of Phoenix has a long and proud history of preserving significant desert open space. In the 1920s, the Heard family and others persuaded the United States Congress to sell us South Mountain Park when it was seven miles outside the city limits. In the 1960s, the City acquired the Papago Buttes. Senator Barry Goldwater and other valley leaders led the way to preserving the landmark Camelback Mountain. In the 1970s, Margaret Hance, Dottie Gilbert, Ruth Hamilton, and others convinced Mayor Driggs to preserve the Phoenix Mountains. That is their legacy—it is now time for our generation to step forward and establish our legacy in setting aside the Sonoran Valley Preserves for future generations.

Skip Rimsza, Mayor of Phoenix, 1998

A. History of Preservation Efforts

The Sonoran Desert environment of central and southern Arizona is our region's most defining characteristic. The City of Phoenix (COP) has a long tradition of preserving large tracts of land with Sonoran vegetation, specifically the paloverde-saguaro communities found on bajadas (coalesced alluvial fans that form a gently sloped apron around the base of a mountain) and mountain slopes (Figure 1.1).

In 1920, Phoenix covered only 5.1 square miles and had a population of 29,033 (Figure 1.2). City leaders had a vision and acquired what they believed to be the last prime recreation site for picnicking, horseback riding, and hiking near the city. This desert mountain region, located seven and three-quarter miles south of the city limits, was called the Salt River Mountains and included the Gila-Guadalupe and Ma Ha Tuak ranges, with Mount Suppoa as its highest peak (2,690 feet). Prominent community leaders whose names we recognize, such as Dobbins, Heard, and Mather, with the help of United States Senator Carl Hayden, encouraged President Coolidge to sell 13,000 acres to the city for $17,000. In 1925 the first patent for South Mountain Park was secured by presidential decree. South Mountain Park, now 16,500 acres, is the largest municipal park in the country and is considered by policy a part of the Phoenix Mountain Preserve System (Parks, Recreation and Library Department [PRLD] 1989).

In 1935, the National Park Service developed a master plan for the park with riding and hiking trails, scenic drives, a museum, picnic areas, and overlooks, all designed with a rustic regional character. The facilities in the park were primarily constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the late 1930s based on this plan. With the 1,200-foot elevation gain along the five-mile stretch of summit road and 22 miles of hiking trails, the park has become increasingly popular. Visitation has soared from 36,000 a year in 1924 to over 3,000,000 a year in the 1990s (Burke 1997). In 1989 a new master plan was prepared for South Mountain Park by P&D Technologies (PRLD 1989).

By 1959 Phoenix had expanded to 187 square miles and had a population of 437,000. The city leaders dedicated themselves to the acquisition of 1,100 acres of unique landforms owned by the State of Arizona (Figure 1.3). The City of Phoenix acquired the land for $3,529 and began improvements immediately with $1 million from the 1957 bond election (PRLD 1996b). They envisioned the development of a premier recreation area, and in 1964 Papago Park was established. Today, the park contains the Phoenix Zoo, the Desert Botanical Garden, picnic areas, urban fishing lakes, and one of the best affordable golf courses in the country (Whitten 1996). Visitation exceeds two million annually. In 1997 the PRLD prepared an inventory of the park's past master plans, historical improvements, cultural resources, and a calendar of annual events (PRLD 1997). In 1998 the environmental consulting firm SWCA Inc. completed a wildlife and habitat inventory and in March 1998 the PRLD completed a master plan that included recommendations for the future development, management, and operations of Papago Park (PRLD 1998).

Figure 1.3 Papago Park circa 1940

Figure 1.1 South Mountain Park

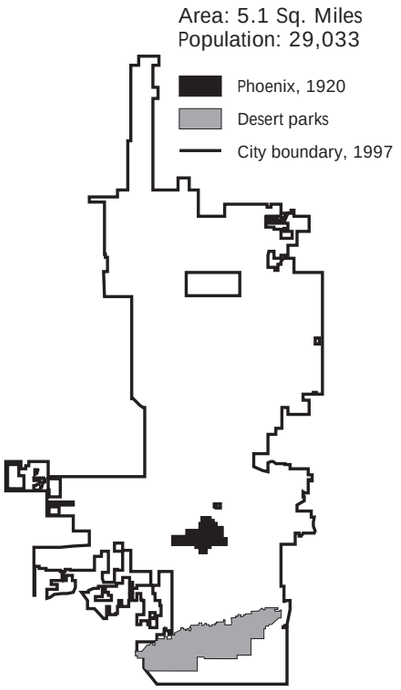

Figure 1.2 Phoenix, 1920

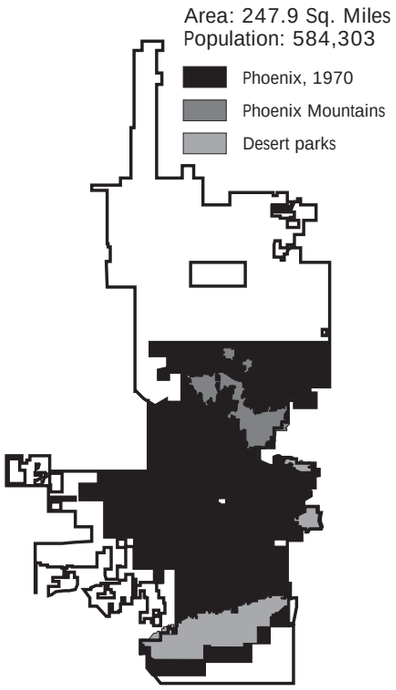

Figure 1.6 Phoenix, 1970

Figure 1.8 Phoenix, 1997

The late 1960s saw the preservation of a regional landmark when U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater, Lady Bird Johnson, and other community leaders teamed up to acquire 350 acres of Camelback Mountain (Figure 1.4). The Save Camelback Foundation promoted the acquisition and preservation of land above the 1,800-foot elevation. In 1971 the city acquired 76 acres on the north side of Camelback from local architect Joe Lort for the development of a trailhead in Echo Canyon. The Camelback Summit Trail is the second most popular trail in the PRLD system with an estimated 350,000 users per year. In the 1980s a second trail access point, Cholla Trail, was acquired at the east end of the mountain.

Figure 1.4 Camelback Mountain circa 1920

On a spring day in 1970, a group of valley horsemen took the Phoenix Mayor and City Council members on a breakfast ride in north Phoenix to demonstrate the beauty and potential of the Phoenix Mountains (Figure 1.5). With development encroaching up the southern slopes of Squaw Peak, activists were concerned that access for horseback riding would be lost and that home sites would scar the ridgelines. After a detailed master plan was completed by Van Cleeve and Associates in 1971, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 13814 and established the Phoenix Mountain Preserve in January 1972 (PRLD 1971). To preserve the skyline and provide open space and recreation to a growing city, which now boasted 584,303 people in 248 square miles (Figure 1.6), 9,700 acres were targeted for acquisition. Today the 7,500-acre preserve (acquired for over $70 million) includes features such as Shaw Butte, North Mountain, and Dreamy Draw Recreation Area, which annually attract 1.5 million visitors to their trails, parks, and picnic areas. The Phoenix Mountain Preserve also contains the Squaw Peak Summit Trail, the most popular summit trail in the country with over 500,000 hikers per year (Burke 1997).

The City of Phoenix currently operates and maintains over 27,000 acres of mountain preserves and desert parks (Figure 1.7), which host many recreational and outdoor activities—hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, picnicking, outdoor education, bird watching, and biological field studies. Since World War II, the City of Phoenix has been witness to explosive growth in population and land area. As the city has expanded, the mountains that once rested on the urban fringe surrounded by plains of creosotebush and bursage have become isolated. They are now islands of Sonoran Desert within a sea of urban development (Burke 1997).

The city is now nearly 470 square miles and is home to 1,204,689 residents (Figure 1.8). Phoenix ranks as the sixth largest city in the country and has consistently been in the top ten cities in the nation for rate of growth. While the amount of dedicated open space has continually increased within the city and Maricopa County, the acreage per capita has decreased (Morrison Institute for Public Policy 1997). As growth continues, dedication to preserving our most unique asset, the Sonoran Desert, must increase accordingly if we are to maintain the long-standing tradition of desert preservation that has established our identity and so significantly affected our quality of life.

B. Benefits of Urban Preserves

Preservation of natural areas within a city can have a profound effect on the entire community. Preserved natural lands provide visual and emotional relief from the day-to-day stresses of living in an urban setting (Spirn 1984; Hough 1989). Natural areas or preserves provide the necessary space for passive outdoor recreation and environmental education. They preserve the indigenous flora and fauna and help maintain biological diversity, which benefits wildlife and humans alike. The preservation of large natural open space systems has also been proven to positively affect residential and commercial property values and development patterns (Correll et al. 1978; Shaw 1992; Fausold and Lilieholm 1996). Proximity to preserves is also a consideration in corporate relocation, economic vitality, and tourism. These benefits can be seen where residential and resort properties adjacent to the existing mountain preserves are considered prime locations. The *Desert Preserve Preliminary Plan* (PRLD

Figure 1.5 Breakfast ride in the North Mountains, 1970

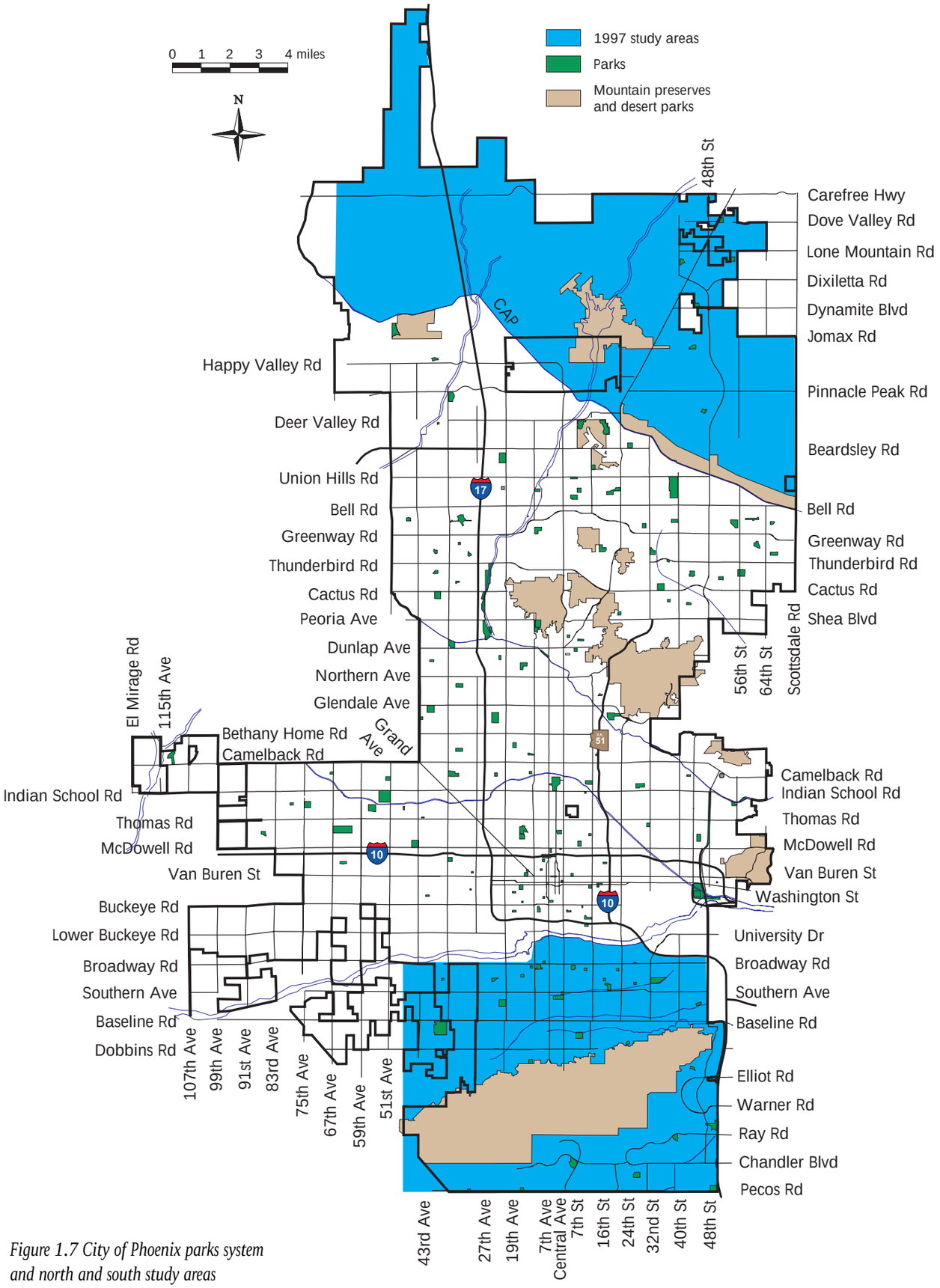

Figure 1.7 City of Phoenix parks system and north and south study areas

1994) identified benefits of urban preserves which are included in the following list.

Property Values

According to *The Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails, and Greenway Corridors*, the amenities that open space and parks provide often result in greater economic vitality (National Park Service 1992). The value of amenities such as natural and cultural resource preservation, convenient educational and recreational opportunities, attractive views, and wildlife enhancement can be seen in increased real property values and increased marketability for property located near open space and parks. Even without doing extensive local research, it is clear that South Mountain, Camelback Mountain, the McDowell Mountains, the Phoenix Mountains, and Indian Bend Wash have had positive impacts on adjacent land values.

Business Relocation and Stability

The Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress reports that a city's quality of life is more important than purely business-related factors when it comes to attracting new businesses, particularly in the high-tech and service industries (National Park Service 1992). Parks and open space affect quality of life issues including convenient access to natural settings and recreational and cultural opportunities. Corporate benefits of healthy and happy employees are increased efficiency and decreased health insurance claims.

A city's quality of life is more important than purely business-related factors when it comes to attracting new businesses, particularly in the high-tech and service industries.

Commercial Impacts

Open space and parks can provide opportunities for businesses; locations for filmmaking, television, and advertisements; and other commercial activities. Areas along a preserve can provide visitor services including special events, food, recreational equipment sales and rentals, lodging, and sales of convenience items.

For example, unique Sonoran Desert settings are in demand for a growing film industry. The economic impact of film production in metropolitan Phoenix in 1994 was $26.3 million, in 1995 was $35.8 million, and in 1996 reached a record $47.1 million (Film Office 1997). The City of Phoenix Motion Picture Coordinating Office (PRLD 1994) states:

> The exposure that Phoenix receives from film, television, and print production not only increases its visibility to the industry but to the audience as well. It familiarizes viewers with the Valley, piques their curiosity, ultimately boosting tourism.

The interdependent relationship between Phoenix area resorts and hotels and the desert environment is promoted in nearly every brochure and advertisement. The Phoenix preserves contribute to the outdoor experience of visitors. For example, many local resorts offer horseback riding that is accommodated on trails within the preserves. According to the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension study, *The Economics of the Horse Industry in Arizona*, Arizona's pleasure horse industry accounts for $196 million in output, $76 million in Arizona income, 4,000 jobs directly, and an additional 2,120 jobs indirectly (Gum et al. 1990).

Tourism

Tourism is the second largest industry in Arizona. Many economists feel that by 2000, tourism will be the top industry in the state. Tourists spend $5 billion in the Phoenix area each year with 175,000 local jobs directly related to tourism (Phoenix and Valley of the Sun Convention and Visitors Bureau 1998). Tourists come to Phoenix primarily to enjoy the Sonoran Desert, Native American history and culture, Western history and culture, recreation, and the resort atmosphere. A desert preserve system offers residents and visitors recreational activities such as horseback riding and hiking in an undisturbed area. It preserves the desert ambiance that has lured so many people to Phoenix over the years.

Expenditures by Residents

Leisure time activities, educational pursuits, and recreation expenditures can account for substantial portions of family spending. This can include educational courses, scientific study, and recreational pursuits such as special events, walking or running, hiking, bicycling, photography, equestrian uses, and driving for pleasure.

Agency Expenditures

The major agencies involved in acquiring and managing land support the local and regional economy by providing jobs and purchasing supplies and services to develop, operate, and maintain parks and related improvements. Numerous nonprofit and community groups focusing on environmental quality also affect the economy. Employment generated by open space programs can be targeted to benefit particular needs of the community, such as youth employment and opportunities for the physically challenged.

Relief from Population Stress

In Maricopa County, the population is expected to double from roughly 2.3 million to 4.1 million by 2020. By 2040,

the Valley's population will be close to 6 million people. The projection that the population of the county will nearly double by 2020 and triple by 2040 has staggering implications. Much of this growth will take place in the city of Phoenix (MAG 1997). How Phoenix manages this growth will determine its success or failure. The mountain parks and preserves are being "loved to death" by the current population. The Phoenix Mountain Preserve is an example of an urban preserve that provides urban dwellers much-needed places to recover from mental fatigue associated with increasingly urban lifestyles (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989). Additional preserves need to be set aside to meet the needs of the next century.

Recreation, Special Events, and Programs
A substantial and cohesive desert preserve system can offer a wide range of recreational opportunities. Activities such as bike riding, hiking, and horseback riding would make the best use of a linear, connected open space. Activity areas can provide desert settings for family outings and picnics.

Environmental Education
Direct contact with nature is the most effective way to nurture stewardship of the land. Perhaps the most important legacy a desert preserve system can provide is a respect for the land and living things and a responsibility to be guardians of the land, keeping it for future generations to enjoy.

Wildlife and Vegetation
Urban preserves and corridors provide ecological and environmental quality. They help maintain biological diversity on a local scale. Preserves also hold scientific value. If a sound knowledge base exists, wildlife, vegetation, and other natural resources can effectively be managed for their multiple benefits and values.

Phoenix's Reputation for Leadership
Since Phoenix won the Carl Bertelsmann Prize for being one of the two best-managed cities in the world, calls and letters have been coming from governments worldwide, wanting to know how Phoenix works so effectively. The city must build on this reputation with farsighted land-use plans. If the city does not look ahead to the long-range benefits of preserving pristine or near pristine desert, the future will hold no more prizes. Phoenix should be the premier desert city, not another example of urban sprawl failure.

Sociocultural Benefits
All citizens and visitors would benefit from a better historical awareness and appreciation of our own and past cultures of the Sonoran Desert. Throughout the City of Phoenix, significant prehistoric and historic resources exist. An urban desert preserve would provide readily accessible opportunities for family cohesion through outdoor recreational activities and educational programs. With researched information presented in programs and interpretive exhibits, the preserve system has the potential for increasing pride in our local culture.

The benefits of desert open space reach beyond those who live adjacent to or near preserve lands. According to a 1993 Trust for Public Land study addressing open space needs and opportunities in America's cities, open space and recreational resources are increasingly being viewed on a regional basis. This perspective is crucial for recognizing the significance of large-scale open space systems such as greenways, watersheds, airsheds, trail systems, flood-prone areas, scenic corridors, and wildlife corridors. A regional approach usually benefits core cities, which can share the fiscal strength of their regional partners.

C. Phoenix Sonoran Preserve Master Plan Study Area

The *Desert Preserve Preliminary Plan* (PRLD 1994), a precursor to the *Sonoran Preserve Master Plan*, focused on two geographic areas within the city, the North Study Area (NSA) and the South Study Area (SSA). These areas were selected because the opportunity to preserve undisturbed desert lands is a matter of urgency in these portions of the city. Once fragile desert lands have been damaged, their restoration is costly and often impossible. These two areas represent the least disturbed desert lands within the city. While properly placed emphasis is on undisturbed lands, it is important to note that disturbed lands within the developed areas of the city can make an important contribution to the overall ecological health and recreational potential of the city's open space system. Obvious examples include the Salt River and the canal system, which could both make significant contributions in creating a connected system of currently isolated islands of natural open space as well as providing additional opportunities for hiking, biking, and walking (Fifield et al. 1990; Cook 1991; MAG 1995). Disturbed lands within the urban core are not the focus of this effort, although it is recognized that they can play a significant role in protecting the ecological health of the preserve.

Metropolitan Phoenix lies within the Sonoran Desert, where ecosystem processes are closely linked to precipitation patterns. Most vegetation growth occurs in the spring following winter rains; however, some growth occurs during the sum-

Direct contact with nature is the most effective way to nurture stewardship of the land. Perhaps the most important legacy a desert preserve system can provide is to teach a respect for the land and living things and a responsibility to be guardians of the land, keeping it for future generations to enjoy.

mer monsoon season. These bimodal rainy seasons enable the land to support diverse and rich plant communities, making the Sonoran Desert the most lush desert in the world. The Sonoran Desert is classified into six categories defined by natural factors such as temperature, precipitation, geology, and soils (Shreve 1951; Brown and Lowe 1982).

The majority of metropolitan Phoenix is located within the subdivision referred to as the Lower Colorado River Valley or the microphyllous desert. This area is the largest and most arid subdivision of the Sonoran Desert. Low annual precipitation and high temperatures support relatively sparse vegetation. The average annual precipitation reported for the City of Phoenix is 7.51 inches (Sellers et al. 1985). Characteristic species include blue paloverde (*Cercidium floridum*), creosotebush (*Larrea tridentata*), and bursage (*Ambrosia*). South Mountain Park, Camelback Mountain, Squaw Peak, and the vast majority of developed areas within the city are located within this subdivision.

In contrast, the northern extent of the city is located in the transition zone between the Lower Colorado River Valley and the Arizona Upland subdivision of the Sonoran Desert. The Arizona Upland subdivision is the most lush and watered desert scrub in North America (Brown 1982). The nearby town of Cave Creek, located adjacent to the northeast edge of the NSA, reports average annual precipitation of 12.25 inches (Sellers et al. 1985). The result of this increase in moisture is an increase in both vegetation diversity and stature, which enriches the aesthetic and wildlife habitat value of north Phoenix (Figures 1.9, 1.10).

The Arizona Upland subdivision is the most lush and watered desert scrub in North America.

South Study Area

Several areas were reviewed for possible inclusion in the park in order to enhance the ecological health of South Mountain Park, the largest management unit within the PRLD System. The wash area between the park and the Western Canal off 35th Avenue and Carver Road, wash and rock outcrops off 32nd Street and South Mountain Avenue that provide potential connection to the Highline Canal, and all of the area between the park boundaries and the proposed South Mountain Freeway alignment (35th to 51st Avenues) were considered in the *Desert Preserve Preliminary Plan* (PRLD 1994) (Figure 1.11).

North Study Area

The study area for the northern portion of the *Phoenix Sonoran Preserve Master Plan* is bordered by the City of Scottsdale, City of Peoria, Town of Cave Creek, and the Town of Care-

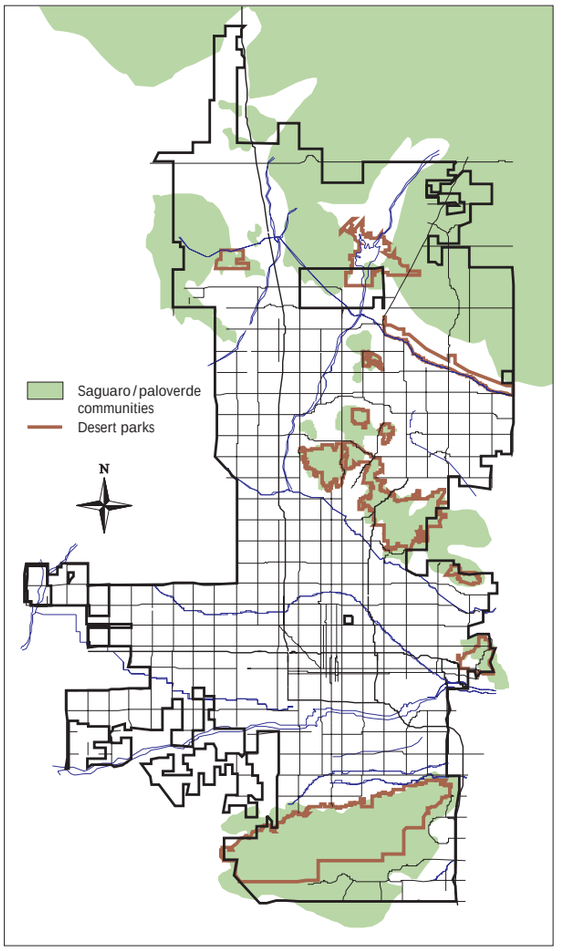

Figure 1.9 Saguaro/paloverde communities in the northern portion of the city define the transition from the Lower Colorado River Valley to the Arizona Upland subdivisions of the Sonoran Desert

Figure 1.10 Saguaro/paloverde community characteristic of Arizona Upland subdivision, near Pyramid Peak

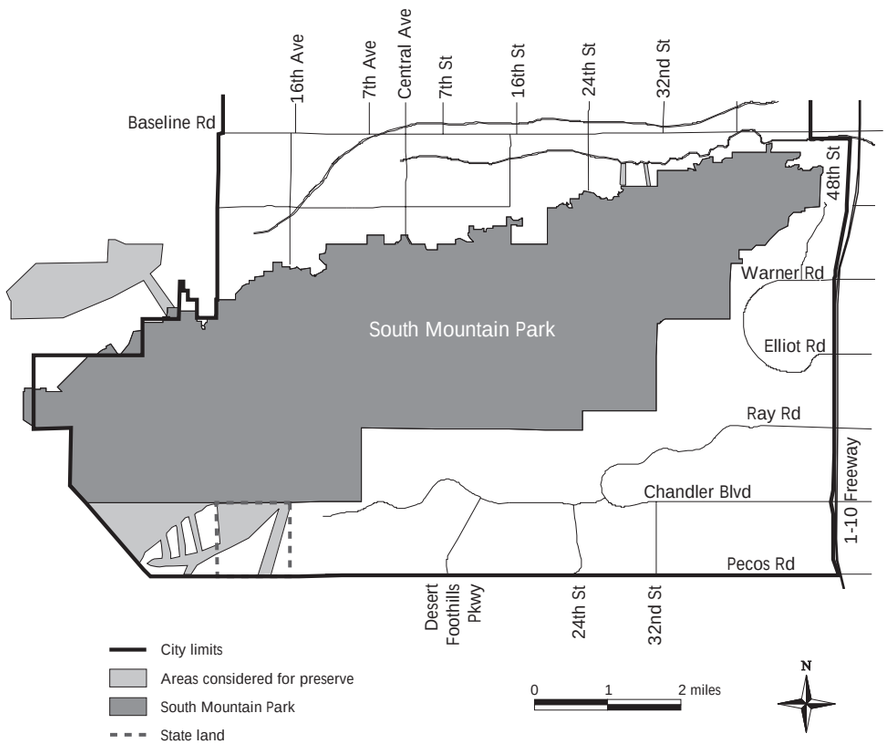

Figure 1.11 South Study Area

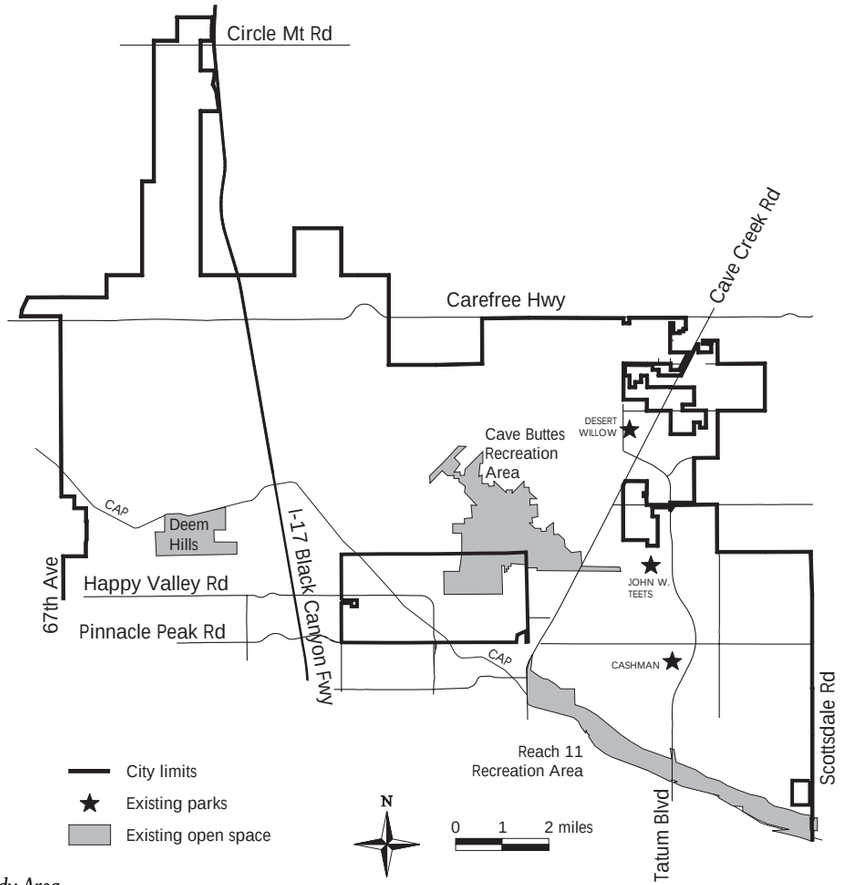

Figure 1.12 North Study Area

The natural beauty of our horizon, our close-in mountain slopes and natural areas—this is the very substance of the natural environment that has been so instrumental in the population and economic growth of this region. The grand scale and rugged character of these mountains have set our lifestyle, broadened our perspective, given us space to breathe, and freshened our outlook. These mountains are the plus that still overweighs the growing minuses in our environmental account.

Preserve advocate
in Luckingham 1989

The North Study Area includes much of the picturesque landscape for which the Sonoran Desert is best known.

free. The study area is bounded by the Central Arizona Project (CAP) Canal on the south, Carefree Highway on the north, Scottsdale Road on the east, and 67th Avenue on the west. Also included in the study area is a corridor along the western edge of Interstate 17 (I-17); this corridor ends at approximately Circle Mountain Road (Figure 1.12).

The NSA includes much of the picturesque landscape for which the Sonoran Desert is best known. This relatively dense vegetation is dominated by creosotebush and bursage. Other significant species are ironwood (*Olneya tesota*), foothill paloverde (*Cercidium microphyllum*), and saguaro (*Carnegiea gigantea*). Wildlife in the area includes birds such as red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), Gila woodpecker (*Melanerpes uropygialis*), and cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*); small mammals such as black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*), rock squirrel (*Spermophilus variegatus*), and Merriam's kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys merriami*); reptiles and amphibians such as desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizi*), Gila monster (*Heloderma suspectum*), and Colorado River toad (*Bufo alvarius*); and a limited number of large mammals such as javelina (*Dycotyles tajacu*) and coyote (*Canis latrans*) (Ewan et al. 1996).

Three large parcels of PRLD land already exist within the NSA. The first, Cave Buttes Recreation Area, is a 2,200-acre flood control facility owned and operated by the Flood Control District of Maricopa County (FCDMC) in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The City of Phoenix became the local recreation sponsor in 1996, so recreation activities are managed by the PRLD. The recreation area is located at Jomax Road and Cave Creek Road. The second area is the 640 acres of Deem Hills the city acquired from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in October 1981 through the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. Deem Hills is located between 35th and 51st Avenues at Jomax Road. Reach 11 Recreation Area is 1,500 acres owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). The primary function for this area is to provide flood protection for the CAP Canal and the adjacent communities of Scottsdale, Paradise Valley, and Phoenix. In 1986 the City of Phoenix entered into a recreational land use agreement with the BOR for public recreation, management, and development of Reach 11. A master plan was approved by the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Board in 1987 and 1995.

The PRLD is currently engaged in the process of developing an environmental impact statement and updating the master plan for approval by the BOR. These three parcels are a beginning for the open space system in the NSA. All three of these parcels are classified by the PRLD as desert parks. Cave Buttes Recreation Area and Reach 11 Recreation Area have district park components within their boundaries and Deem Hills has a community park within its southwestern border.

Major washes in the NSA are Cave Creek Wash, running from the CAP Canal north through the city limits, and Skunk Creek from Happy Valley Road to Cloud Road. These two washes are significant xeric-riparian areas and are mostly undisturbed. Secondary wash corridors include Apache Wash, Buchanan Wash and its tributaries northwest of the CAP Canal and I-17, Deadman Wash, and the northeastern tributaries of Skunk Creek. The unnamed washes in Tatum Ranch, Tatum Highlands, and the Desert Ridge communities that run southwest from Scottsdale to the CAP Canal are also included in the NSA.

Mountains in the NSA include Union Hills, Deem Hills, Pyramid Peak, Middle Mountain, Ludden Mountain, and Hedgepeth Hills. These landforms are typical of the basin and range province. The mountains generally run parallel in a southeast-to-northwest direction. Between mountains lie outwash plains. These landforms are relatively low-lying with the greatest elevation change occurring at Pyramid Peak (2,283 feet) and the highest point occurring in the Union Hills near the Carefree Highway (2,461 feet).

The NSA contains two designated growth management areas—Desert Ridge / Paradise Ridge and the North Black Canyon Corridor (Planning Department 1997a, 1997b). Currently there are few improvements in these areas. The few residential communities that have begun to develop in the area are adjacent to or east of Cave Creek Road. Two rezoning applications in the I-17 corridor have been reviewed and approved in this area. In addition, two power line easements traverse the NSA. A 69-kilovolt power line runs east-to-west, south of the Happy Valley Road alignment. A 230-kilovolt power line runs northwest-to-southeast from the intersection of Pinnacle Peak and Scottsdale Roads, crossing the Carefree Highway between 24th and 32nd Streets.

D. General Philosophy for the Sonoran Preserve

Identifying pristine and near pristine desert land throughout the City of Phoenix presents a challenge because much of the developed portions of the city have all but erased any trace of the natural environment. In these areas, restoration rather than preservation is more appropriate. The low-density development pattern that has evolved in Phoenix provides an opportunity to reestablish natural areas within the urban environment (Cook 1991).

However, desert restoration is more costly than preservation since natural processes alone take decades to reestablish flora and fauna. Tests done at the Desert Experimental Range in Utah indicate that once damaged, desert plants may take 30 years to improve from poor to good condition and some species never recover (Ginsberg 1976). Because of the inherent value of undisturbed Sonoran Desert lands and the costs associated with restoration, the Sonoran Preserve focuses on the relatively undisturbed land that lies within the NSA and SSA (Figure 1.13).

Figure 1.13 Undisturbed Sonoran Desert, the Union Hills

Growth pressures, urban sprawl, inappropriate use, and air and water pollution increasingly threaten the remaining undisturbed areas within the city of Phoenix. While the 110 square miles of the NSA are under development pressure, the area is still relatively undeveloped. This presents an important opportunity to identify, plan for, and protect natural areas prior to development. The lands included in the study area encourage the preservation and linkage of native habitats and areas of physical, cultural, and/or historic value. The master plan addresses currently annexed areas of Phoenix and considers significant lands adjacent to the city boundaries. The preliminary criteria used to define the lands that should be part of the preserve system included:

- Biological and ecological significance
- Scenic quality
- Public recreation, education, or interpretation potential
- Historic, cultural, and/or archaeological significance
- Proximity to existing or potential scenic corridors
- Linkage to mountains and/or planned or existing public open space
- Sufficient public access via roads or trails
- Unique natural features such as canyons, saguaro stands, springs, and rock outcrops
- Proximity to existing or planned major or secondary drainageways
- Adjacent to existing or planned utility corridors and/or easements

The Phoenix Sonoran Preserve will benefit wildlife, define the urban setting, positively impact human health and well-being, and have significant recreational value. It will also complement the city's existing Mountain Preserve System and build on its success by adding additional types of lands that are of ecological significance. Preserving undisturbed Sonoran Desert is the basic premise of the master plan. Preserving a diversity of lands in addition to the mountains, which have long been protected within the Phoenix Mountain Preserve System, is envisioned to provide a system of unique natural open space that offers the community tremendous opportunity for outdoor recreation, contact with the natural environment, and habitat for wildlife.

diversity

The preservation of a diversity of lands is envisioned to provide a system of unique natural open space that offers the community tremendous opportunity for outdoor recreation, contact with the natural environment, and habitat for wildlife.